GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2107
ANSWERED ON:22.07.2004
ATROCITIES AGAINST DALITS
Mohale Shri Punnulal

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to make the existing provisions for seeking to do away with Caste based discriminations and atrocities being committed against dalits more stringent;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SMT. SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN)

(a) to (c) In accordance with provisions of Article 17 of the Constitution of India, `Untouchability` stands abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 prescribes punishment for the enforcement of any disability arising from preaching and practice of untouchability, which usually emanate from caste-based discrimination. It was felt that despite various measures to improve the socio-economic conditions of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, they remained vulnerable and subjected to various offences, indignities, humiliations and harassment and that the existing laws like the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1995 and the normal provisions of the Indian Penal Code were found to be inadequate, therefore, a special legislation to check and deter crimes against them by non-Scheduled Castes and non-Scheduled Tribes had become necessary and accordingly a more stringent legislation viz the Schheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 was enacted.

The Government of India has been from time to time addressing the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations to implement the provisions of the Act in letter and spirit and central assistance is also provided to them mainly for strengthening of the administrative, enforcement and judicial machinery, awareness generation, and relief and rehabilitation of the affected persons. Further, for ensuring early prosecution of atrocity cases, 137 Exclusive Special Courts, have been set up in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhatisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh and that all State Governments except Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland, which are predominantly tribal Area States, have also notified the existing Courts of Sessions as Special Courts for the trial of offences under the Act.

The Government of India is, thus, making earnest efforts towards effective implementation of the Acts.